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The Greatest Transition for Mankind

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Following is the text of a speech by Gus Hall, leading Communist spokesman, to a meeting sponsored by the Humanitas Society in McMillin Theatre, Columbia University, on Dec. 15.

BECAUSE I AM so aware of the pressures you of Humanitas Society have been under during the past days, I am even more grateful for having this opportunity to take part in this exchange.

These pressures are in fact closely related to the nature of the U.S. policy in Vietnam.

When the aggression could not achieve its goals in Vietnam through demagoguery, fenced in hamlets, through the so-called advisers, through the corrupt Diem regimes, through "anti-insurgency," it shifted to the present policy of genocide, to a war of depopulation, to the most brutal policy of saturation bombing, to the most heinous act of literally burning of a people, putting a nation to the torch, by the massive use of napalm bombs. It is a policy based on the concept that if you can't win the people, the people become the enemy, the target. And the enemy must be destroyed. The increased attempts at creating the atmosphere of hysteria, of jingoism, on the home front, the threats of and acts of violence against the Americans who oppose this criminal policy is a corollary of the changed nature of the war in Vietnam.

War Hysteria

THE STAFFS of the war hawks, the FBI, the CIA fronts, like the Freedom House, the Birchites, the KKK, the Billy Grahams have all taken to the stump, not to discuss the issues, but in the attempt to create the war hysteria. The first announced casualty on the economic front is the Appalachia program. Here the war against the people replaces the announced war against poverty.

These changes are in fact evidence of the failure of the old policies. They are failures because the policy of aggression and war remains against the best interests of the people of Vietnam, and because it is against the best real interests of the people of the U.S.

The use of a new crime to cover up the failure of a past crime can only lead to the committing of an even bigger crime. This is the deadly logic of the policy of escalating the war of aggression in Vietnam. The deadly logic of the war in Vietnam leads to a world nuclear war. It could be the "crime to end all crimes." It could be the "war to end all wars" because it could end human existence on this globe.

On this path there is a point of no return. There is a point where all discussions, all exchanges will have no value or meaning. From that point on, war fronts, casualty figures, expenditures for war, budgets, or even the debate of who is wrong, who is the criminal and who the victim — will all take on a meaning in a qualitatively different world — if there will be one. The new bombings of the North Vietnam industrial installations are a very dangerous step along this path.

So when we are discussing the war in Vietnam we are in fact discussing the immediate and the longer range prospects of every phase of human society. I will return to this question, but let me briefly introduce a related question.

The Big Lie

THE CENTRAL ideological Trojan horse of our times is the use of the Big Lie, anti-communism.

The "canned cover" story for every war, for every act of aggression is anti-communism. Hitler fascism murdered 30-40 million people under the cover of fighting the spectre of Communism. The late Senator McCarthy used it when he said, "I hold in my hand a list" — and then called for aggression against the liberties of all Americans. The presence of 58 Communists in the Dominican Republic became the "cover story" and seemingly enough reason to send 35,000 U.S. Marines there.

Al Capone and Anastasia both appealed for understanding and respectability because, as they said, "after all, we are anti-Communists." The "cover story" according to the historian, Arthur Schlesinger, is the use of a deliberate lie. He admits his own use of it when the facts would not convince and justifies it by anti-communism.

Under the hysteria of the McCarthyite witch-hunts, Congress passed laws that completely subverted the Constitution, such as the McCarran Act.

I am not talking about people who honestly disagree with or are not informed about the Communist position. Because we know that the majority of our fellow Americans do not agree with us on many basic questions. This we do not resent or condemn. This we welcome as a challenge.

I am talking about the big lie — anti-communism, the demagogic appeal to utter falsehoods. This kind of anti-communism has become the ideological narcotic of our day.

It is dangerous because under its spell, anything goes. This kind of anti-communism is a weapon against everything progressive — it is a tool of oppression. It has become the main ideological weapon of all anti-democratic, anti-labor, anti-Negro, anti-intellectual forces in our country. It is the tool of the pro-war and pro-fascist forces in our land.

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THE VERY NATURE of this "artillery of words" about Communism is a critical assessment of the state of our social science. For some 90 percent of this torrent of cliches is not devoted to any rational, objective examination of the stated subject. It is not a weighing of the facts, it is not a dialogue about nor a challenge to the ideas or the concepts of Communism. Its very purpose is not to discuss communism.

Rather it is a gigantic fraud. It is an exercise in inflating the ghost, it is an emotional appeal about the evils of the apparition, it is sticking the pins into a conjured-up caricature image of communism. This noise is about the caricature of the ghost —

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